

Medicare in order to help balance the federal budget; and

Whereas, while Congress had considered cutting the dollars to physicians treating Medicare patients, but did not have the collective will to carry it through, being concerned that some physicians might not continue to treat Medicare patients at a reduced rate, and the cut was postponed until a future date; and

Whereas, over the last eighteen years Congress has postponed the cut seventeen times and the cut has become a possible twenty percent reduction in payments if the attempt to postpone the cuts failed during this Congress; and

Whereas, with the current doc fix extension set to expire on March 31, 2015, Congress may consider the need for structural reforms to Medicare generally, not merely a postponement of the cut for another year; and

Whereas, with the unconscionable cut of more than twenty percent looming without the annual doc fix extension in April, Congress agreed to begin broader structural changes to Medicare, ending the doc fix shell game permanently;

Whereas, despite the reality that healthcare is expensive and that the annual revisiting of the doc fix formula of paying physicians was, at least, a bad way to govern, a bipartisan solution proved attainable even in a time when merely entertaining an idea from the other side of the aisle is often unthinkable; and

Whereas, with the reality that one political party leads both houses of Congress and the other holds the presidency, true bipartisanship is the only path to successfully attacking any of the country's issues, yet that bipartisanship is noticeably absent in the discussion of most of those issues; and

Whereas, while partisan differences have been more likely to win the day, the ability to craft a bipartisan doc fix solution requires the leadership of both political parties in both houses to focus on solutions rather than differences, and for that both the leadership and the members of Congress as a whole should be heartily congratulated; and

Whereas, in reaching agreement on the end to the doc fix extensions, Congress has begun the daunting task of reforming and restructuring America's entitlement programs, a beginning worthy of note and of acclaim: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the United States Congress on the passage of bipartisan legislation to permanently set the payment amounts that Medicare pays for physician services, known as the doc fix; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-48. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana memorializing the United States Congress to restore trade relations between the United States and Cuba in order to open the market to Louisiana rice; to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 68

Whereas, in 2014, Louisiana produced over three billion pounds of rice amounting to fifteen percent of the United States' rice production; and

Whereas, the rice industry provides over nine thousand jobs to the Louisiana economy; and

Whereas, increased rice exports to Cuba would lead to greater export opportunities

for Louisiana farmers and the potential for increased acreage; and

Whereas, resumed rice exports to Cuba would also benefit those affiliated with rice production, milling, and exporting; and

Whereas, rice farming and milling has a large impact on Louisiana's secondary economy in that for every dollar that Louisiana rice produces, approximately thirty-five cents is added indirectly to the economy through seed and fertilizer sales, farm equipment, crop services, and transportation; and

Whereas, resuming the trade of rice with Cuba would be a huge economic gain for Louisiana's port system; and

Whereas, prior to the creation of the trade embargo in 1962, the Port of New Orleans handled over sixty-five percent of all traded goods to Cuba; and

Whereas, the fifty-plus-year trade embargo between the United States and Cuba remains the longest-standing embargo in modern history; and

Whereas, Louisiana is the top state of origination for Cuban-bound exports, representing nearly thirty percent of the export market share; and

Whereas, it is time to end an outdated policy that continues to deny valuable business opportunities to Louisiana rice farmers, millers, and allied businesses, such as transportation, storage, and shipping; and

Whereas, Cuba imports more than one billion dollars worth of food every year, including approximately five hundred thousand tons of rice; and

Whereas, the rice industry in Louisiana is positioned to benefit from the market opportunities that normalized trade with Cuba would provide due to our healthy supply, port infrastructure, and proximity to Cuba; and

Whereas, the USA Rice Federation and its affiliate members along with the Louisiana Rice Growers Association, the Louisiana Rice Promotion Board, and the Louisiana Rice Council are in support of restoring trade relations between the United States and Cuba in order to open the market to Louisiana rice: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana memorializes the Congress of the United States to restore trade relations between the United States and Cuba in order to open the market to Louisiana rice; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate, the clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

POM-49. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Missouri urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to repeal the excise tax on medical devices; to the Committee on Finance.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 29

Whereas, a new 2.3% federal excise tax on the sale of taxable medical devices by manufacturers, producers, and importers of such devices took effect on January 1, 2013; and

Whereas, the United States Congress Joint Committee on Taxation estimates that the tax will generate \$29 billion in revenue in its first ten years; and

Whereas, the United States is a net exporter in medical devices, exporting \$5.4 billion more than it imports, and accounts for 40% of the global medical technology market; and

Whereas, a study completed by the Manhattan Institute found that the medical device tax will almost double the medical device industry's total tax bill and could result in the loss of up to 43,000 jobs in the medical technology industry; and

Whereas, the medical device tax will harm the United States' global competitiveness, stunt medical innovation, and restrict the ability of patients to receive the life-saving medical devices and care they need; and

Whereas, the medical device tax is imposed on United States sales, rather than profits, of medical device manufacturers, so it will be particularly damaging to innovative start-up companies: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the members of the Missouri Senate, Ninety-eighth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby urge the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States to repeal the excise tax on medical devices; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Missouri Senate be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives and the members of the Missouri Congressional delegation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HEINRICH:

S. 1749. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow allocation of certain renewable energy tax credits to Indian tribes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr.

BLUNT, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1750. A bill to decrease the deficit by realigning, consolidating, disposing, and improving the efficiency of Federal buildings and other civilian real property, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1751. A bill to provide for a grant program for handgun licensing programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 1752. A bill to enhance communication between Federal, State, tribal, and local jurisdictions and to ensure the rapid and effective deportation of certain criminal aliens; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 1753. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify and permanently extend qualified zone academy bonds, and to treat such bonds as specified tax credit bonds; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. LEAHY:

S. Res. 222. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Federation Internationale de Football Association should immediately eliminate gender pay inequity and treat all athletes with the same respect and dignity; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.